

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A wearable device for carrying an elongated structure with opposing ends in a generally vertical orientation, the device comprising:

a harness constructed to attach to a user's torso when the wearable device is worn in an operative position;

one or more retainers attached to the harness, the one or more retainers being positioned with respect to the harness so as to be located adjacent the user's back when the wearable device is worn in the operative position, the one or more retainers being constructed to retain a portion of the elongated structure between the opposing ends thereof;

a receptacle constructed to receive one of the opposing ends of the elongated structure; and

one or more support members attaching the receptacle to the harness so as to suspend the receptacle below the one or more retainers and the harness when the wearable device is worn in the operative position;

the one or more retainers and the receptacle being arranged with respect to one another such that, when the wearable device is worn in the operative position, the one or more retainers and the receptacle cooperate to support the elongated structure in the generally vertical orientation with (a) a lower one of the opposing ends of the elongated structure being received in the receptacle so as to be supported by the receptacle, and (b) the one or more retainers engaging a portion of the elongated structure between the opposing ends thereof to retain the elongated structure in the generally vertical orientation; and

wherein the one or more support members are elongated and extend downwardly from the harness to suspend the receptacle at a position below the wearer's buttocks when the wearable device is worn in the operative position.

2. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 1, wherein the one or more retainers are constructed to permit limited lateral movement of the elongated structure relative to the main body.

3. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 1, wherein the harness includes a main body positioned so as to be located adjacent the user's back when the wearable device is worn in the operative position, the one or more retainers being attached to the main body.

4. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 3, wherein the one or more support members attach the receptacle to the main body.

5. (Canceled).

6. (Currently Amended) A wearable device according to claim ~~[[5]]~~ 4, wherein the one or more elongated support members includes a plurality of flexible straps connected between the main body and the receptacle.

7. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 6, wherein each of the flexible straps have length adjusters to enable adjustment of a distance at which the receptacle is suspended below the main body when the wearable device is worn in the operative position.

8. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 7, wherein the length adjusters are buckles.

9. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 1, wherein the receptacle is vertically adjustable to enable adjustment of a distance at which the receptacle is suspended below the harness when the wearable device is worn in the operative position.

10. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 9, wherein the harness includes a main body positioned so as to be located adjacent the user's back when the wearable device is worn in the operative position, the one or more retainers being attached to the main body.

11. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 10, wherein the one or more support members attach the receptacle to the main body.

12. (Canceled).

13. (Currently Amended) A wearable device according to claim ~~[[12]]~~ 11, wherein the one or more elongated support members each has a length adjuster to enable adjustment of a distance at which the receptacle suspends below the main body when the wearable device is worn in the operative position.

14. (Currently Amended) A wearable device according to claim 13, wherein the one or more elongated support members includes a plurality of flexible straps connected between the main body and the receptacle.

15. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 14, and wherein the length adjusters are buckles.

16. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 1, wherein the receptacle is made of a flexible fabric formed to define a pocket for receiving one of the opposing ends of the elongated structure.

17. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 6, wherein the receptacle is made of a flexible fabric formed to define a pocket for receiving one of the opposing ends of the elongated structure.

18. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 7, wherein the receptacle is made of a flexible fabric formed to define a pocket for receiving one of the opposing ends of the elongated structure.

19. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 9, wherein the receptacle is made of a flexible fabric formed to define a pocket for receiving one of the opposing ends of the elongated structure.

20. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 13, wherein the receptacle is made of a flexible fabric formed to define a pocket for receiving one of the opposing ends of the elongated structure.

21. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 14, wherein the receptacle is made of a flexible fabric formed to define a pocket for receiving one of the opposing ends of the elongated structure.

22. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 3 wherein each of the one or more retainers defines an opening that faces generally vertically when the wearable device is worn in the operative position, the generally vertically facing opening enabling the elongated structure to be received therein and extend therethrough.

23. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 22, wherein each of the one or more retainers includes a loop attached to the main body, the loop defining the generally vertically facing opening.

24. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 23, wherein each loop includes a pair of separable members that releasably attach to one another, the releasable attachment of each loop enabling the separable members to be separated to open the associated loop and accommodate radial receipt of the elongated structure into the opening thereof, and also enabling the separable members to be re-attached to close the associated loop and retain the elongated structure.

25. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 24, wherein the separable members of each loop are flexible.

26. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 25, wherein the releasable attachment of each loop is provided by a hook and pile fastener having a plurality of hooks on one separable member and a pile on the other separable member.

27. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 25, wherein each loop is defined by a strap and wherein the separable members are the opposing ends of the strap.

28. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 27, wherein the releasable attachment of each loop is provided by hook and pile fasteners having a plurality of hooks on one end of the strap and a pile on the other end of the strap.

29. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 22, wherein each of the one or more retainers includes a pair of separable members that releasably attach to one another, the releasable attachment of each retainer enabling the separable members to be separated to open the associated retainer and accommodate radial receipt of the elongated structure into the opening thereof, and also enabling the separable members to be re-attached to close the associated retainer and retain the elongated structure.

30. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 29, wherein the separable members of each retainer are flexible.

31. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 30, wherein the releasable attachment of each retainer is provided by a hook and pile fastener having a plurality of hooks on one separable member and a pile on the other separable member.

32. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 30, wherein each of the one or more retainers includes a loop attached to the main body with the loop defining the generally vertically facing opening, the separable members being parts of the loop.

33. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 32, wherein each loop is defined by a strap and wherein the separable members are the opposing ends of the strap.

34. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 33, wherein the releasable attachment of each loop is provided by hook and pile fasteners having a plurality of hooks on one end of the strap and a pile on the other end of the strap.

35. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 9, wherein each of the one or more retainers defines an opening that faces generally vertically when the wearable

device is worn, the generally vertically facing opening enabling the elongated structure to be received therein and extend therethrough.

36. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 35, wherein each of the one or more retainers includes a loop attached to the main body, the loop defining the generally vertically facing opening.

37. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 36, wherein each loop includes a pair of separable members that releasably attach to one another, the releasable attachment of each loop enabling the separable members to be separated to open the associated loop and accommodate radial receipt of the elongated structure into the opening thereof, and also enabling the separable members to be re-attached to close the associated loop and retain the elongated structure.

38. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 37, wherein the separable members of each loop are flexible.

39. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 38, wherein the releasable attachment of each loop is provided by a hook and pile fastener having a plurality of hooks on one separable member and a pile on the other separable member.

40. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 38, wherein each loop is defined by a strap and wherein the separable members are the opposing ends of the strap.

41. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 40, wherein the releasable attachment of each loop is provided by hook and pile fasteners having a plurality of hooks on one end of the strap and a pile on the other end of the strap.

42. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 35, wherein each of the one or more retainers includes a pair of separable members that releasably attach to one another, the releasable attachment of each retainer enabling the separable members to be separated to open the associated retainer and accommodate radial receipt of the elongated

structure into the opening thereof, and also enabling the separable members to be re-attached to close the associated retainer and retain the elongated structure.

43. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 42, wherein the separable members of each retainer are flexible.

44. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 43, wherein the releasable attachment of each retainer is provided by a hook and pile fastener having a plurality of hooks on one separable member and a pile on the other separable member.

45. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 43, wherein each of the one or more retainers includes a loop attached to the main body with the loop defining the generally vertically facing opening, the separable members being parts of the loop.

46. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 45, wherein each loop is defined by a strap and wherein the separable members are the opposing ends of the strap.

47. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 46, wherein the releasable attachment of each loop is provided by hook and pile fasteners having a plurality of hooks on one end of the strap and a pile on the other end of the strap.

48. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 1, further comprising an outer garment shell configured to cover a user's torso when the wearable device is worn in the operative position;

the harness being an internal harness mounted interiorly of the outer garment shell;

the one or more retainers, the one or more support members and the receptacle being located in one or more spaces defined between the internal harness and the outer garment shell;

the outer garment shell having one or more access openings for accessing the one or more spaces to permit the one or more retainers, the one or more support members and the receptacle to be positioned exteriorly of the outer garment shell for use.

49. (Original) A wearable device for carrying an elongated structure with opposing ends in a generally vertical orientation, the device comprising:

an outer garment shell configured to cover a user's torso when the wearable device is worn in an operative position;

an internal harness mounted interiorly of the outer garment shell, the internal harness being constructed to attach to the user's torso when the wearable device is worn in the operative position;

one or more supports attached to the internal harness so as to be located adjacent the user's back when the wearable device is worn in the operative position, the one or more supports being located in one or more spaces defined between the internal harness and the outer garment shell,

the outer garment shell having one or more access openings for accessing the one or more spaces to permit the one or more supports to be positioned exteriorly of the outer garment shell for use;

the one or more supports being constructed to support the elongated structure on the internal harness in the generally vertical orientation thereof when positioned exteriorly of the outer garment shell for use, thus allowing weight of the elongated structure to be transferred to the user's torso via the internal harness.

50. (Original) A wearable device according to claim 49, wherein the one or more supports comprises:

one or more retainers attached to the internal harness, the one or more retainers being positioned with respect to the internal harness so as to be located adjacent the user's back when the wearable device is worn in the operative position, the one or more retainers being constructed to retain a portion of the elongated structure between the opposing ends thereof;

a receptacle constructed to receive one of the opposing ends of the elongated structure; and

one or more support members attaching the receptacle to the internal harness so as to suspend the receptacle below the one or more retainers and the internal harness when the wearable device is worn in the operative position;

the one or more retainers and the receptacle being arranged with respect to one another such that, when the wearable device is worn in the operative position, the one or more retainers and the receptacle cooperate to support the elongated structure in the generally

vertical orientation with (a) a lower one of the opposing ends of the elongated structure being received in the receptacle so as to be supported by the receptacle, and (b) the one or more retainers engaging a portion of the elongated structure between the opposing ends thereof to retain the elongated structure in the generally vertical orientation.

51. (New) A wearable device according to claim 50, wherein the one or more support members are elongated and extend downwardly from the harness to suspend the receptacle at a position below the wearer's buttocks when the wearable device is worn in the operative position.